

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A catalyst body comprising:

a porous carrier in which a large number of aggregate particles containing a main component of a nonoxide ceramic and/or a metal are bonded to one another while a large number of pores are disposed; and

a catalyst layer carried on the porous carrier and containing a compound of an alkali metal and/or an alkali earth metal,

wherein the porous carrier consists essentially of aggregate particles bonded to each other, has an oxide film unavoidably formed from material of the aggregate particles on a part of the surface of the aggregate particles, and an oxide film protective layer formed of a material which does not form low-melting glass with the alkali metal and/or alkali earth metal used as a NO_x trap catalyst that is further disposed on ~~between~~ the oxide film so as to coat and the catalyst layer in such a manner as to coat at least a part of the oxide film.

14. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the porous carrier contains a main component of the nonoxide ceramic containing a silicon (Si) element and/or metal silicon.

15. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the porous carrier contains a main component of at least one selected from the group consisting of silicon carbide (SiC), metal silicon bonded silicon carbide (Si-SiC), and silicon nitride (Si₃N₄).

16. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the oxide film contains a main component of silica (SiO₂).

17. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the material which does not form the low-melting glass with the alkali metal and/or alkali earth metal is a compound of at least one element selected from elements belonging to the group A:

the group A: scandium (Sc), titanium (Ti), vanadium (V), chromium (Cr), manganese (Mn), iron (Fe), cobalt (Co), nickel (Ni), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn), gallium (Ga), germanium (Ge), yttrium (Y), zirconium (Zr), niobium (Nb), molybdenum (Mo), tin (Sn), and antimony (Sb).

18. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 17, wherein the material which does not form the low-melting glass with the alkali metal and/or alkali earth metal is a compound of at least one element selected from the group consisting of zirconium (Zr) and titanium (Ti) among the elements belonging to the group A.

19. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 16, wherein an oxide of the alkali metal and/or alkali earth metal, the material which does not form the low-melting glass with the alkali metal and/or alkali earth metal, and silica (SiO_2) have an eutectic point at 800°C or more.

20. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the porous carrier has a porosity of 40 to 90%.

21. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the catalyst layer contains a compound of at least one noble metal element selected from the group consisting of platinum (Pt), palladium (Pd), and rhodium (Rh) in addition to the compound of the alkali metal and/or alkali earth metal.

22. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the porous carrier has a honeycomb form having a plurality of cells which are partitioned by partition walls and which constitute channels of a fluid.

23. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 22, wherein the porous carrier further comprises plugging portions which alternately plug inlet-side and outlet-side end faces of the plurality of cells.

24. (Previously Presented) The catalyst body according to claim 22, wherein the porous carrier comprises a plurality of honeycomb segments, and the plurality of honeycomb segments are integrally bonded.

25. (New) The catalyst body according to claim 13, wherein the aggregate particles include a main component comprising of at least one material selected from silicon metal, silicon carbide or a mixture thereof.